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BLETCHLEY

Urban
District
Council



ANNUAL

REPORT

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF
CHIEF PUBLIC **HEALTH** INSPECTOR



Bletchley Urban District Council



Chairman of the Council:

Councillor C. E. BOWDEN

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Chairman:

Councillor E. R. STANIFORD, J.P.

Members:

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| Councillors | Mrs. G. E. GREENAWAY |
| | G. BRISTOW |
| | N. A. CHEEK |
| | T. C. DICKENS |
| | P. E. W. DUNGATE |
| | F. C. HOLROYD |

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health:

P. Lavis, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., M.F.C.M.,

(Also M.O.H. for Buckingham M.B., the Urban Districts of Newport Pagnell and Wolverton, the Rural Districts of Buckingham, Newport Pagnell and Winslow, Area M.O. for North Bucks and Divisional S.M.O. for the North Bucks Division and the Buckingham and Winslow District.)

Deputy Medical Officer of Health:

S. Hetherington, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., M.F.C.M.,

Chief Public Health Inspector:

A. James, M.A.P.H.I.

Deputy Chief Public Health Inspector:

J. R. Bailey, M.A.P.H.I.

Additional Public Health Inspector:

Mrs. P. A. Jones, (up to 22.7.71)

A. R. Jackson, M.A.P.H.I. (from 20.9.71)

Student Public Health Inspector:


P. H. J. Winsor

Rodent Officer:

A. G. Meacham

Clerical Assistant:

Miss C. M. Stone



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To the Chairman and Councillors of the

BLETCHLEY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My introduction to the 1970 Report drew attention to the need to pay more attention to the quality of life. It appears that 1971 has generally been a year where much more publicity has been given to the pollution aspect of this, heightened by the occurrence of a number of dramatic incidents giving rise to hazardous situations. Locally, for example the River Ouzel was subjected to toxic materials more than once and its "normal" condition is still not as clean as one would wish. Unfortunately the mass communication media tend to give emphasis to the more hair-raising prophecies of doom concocted by some individuals, and this might result in a general reaction to regard all warnings of coming problems with cynicism and treat them as fictitious. Unless this problem is treated seriously by the individual, in the years to come responsibility will have to be transferred from the individual to a more authoritarian type government that will act for the individual. This responsibility must be taken across all fields of activity from mundane matters such as reducing the quantity of waste materials (buying by the appearance of the packet rather than its contents), acquisition of articles as status symbols rather than their actual usefulness, to more esoteric matters as the need for large families. In every report I have mentioned the need for limitation of family size, and I make no apology for stressing this again. Many, if not most, of our problems would be brought into manageable proportions if the population could be reduced or at least stabilised. There is urgent need for a free family planning service to be provided by the National Health Service.

The catastrophe that would have descended upon us from the third London airport has now been averted, probably due to public awareness of the facts and their willingness to take action.

Fortunately I can report that this has been an improved year as far as communicable diseases is concerned.

At last we are able to proceed with the relatively basic need to reduce domestic chimney pollution and declare the first Smoke Control Area. It is necessary for all householders in this first area to ensure that they can heat their homes without producing smoke by November 1st, 1972. The remainder of the town will be similarly affected in successive stages.

About the time this report appears I anticipate that the government will have made known its intentions on the re-organisation of the National Health Service. The Council is already concerned with ensuring adequate public representation in the forthcoming new larger district council, and I would like them to consider this aspect on the new Area Health Boards. Community representation has not been a feature of the present health set-up, but there should be an opportunity in 1974 for this to be rectified.

Health Education

One of the most successful new projects undertaken and being continued is a number of clinics for the obese now being run by the County Health Department. The need to avoid overweight cannot be overstressed and to cope with the demand special clinics have been run for older school children who are accepting the advice to keep slim.

The Council will also be interested to know that a special committee, was set up to keep a surveillance on drug abuse. This committee meets regularly to watch trends and discuss ways of combating any rise that might occur.

Staffing

With the resignation of Mrs. P. A. Jones in July 1971, we were fortunate to be able to appoint a new Inspector, Mr. A. R. Jackson in September. The volume of Public Health work (not to mention additional tasks such as Hackney Carriages, Market Manager and Petroleum Officer) means that we would be in great difficulties if any staff were lost.

I must thank Mr. James for the thoroughness and efficiency with which he manages the department and also the Council for the responsible way Public Health matters are considered.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

P. Lavis

VITAL STATISTICSGENERAL:

| | 1970 | 1971 |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Area (in acres) | 4,459 | 4,459 |
| Population (mid-year estimate) | 30,290 | 30,820 |
| (Census 1971) | | 30,608 |
| Rateable Value (1st April) | £1,650,133 | £1,703,076 |
| Rate per £1 | 12/11d | 74.50p |
| Sum represented by 1d rate | £7,250 | |
| by 1p rate | | £18,480 |

BIRTHS:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----|------|
| Legitimate | Males | 332 | 351 |
| | Females | 288 | 350 |
| Illegitimate | Males | 12 | 20 |
| | Females | 21 | 14 |
| Birth rate per 1,000 Population - | | | |
| (Adjusted) | 16.4 | | 18.1 |
| Birth rate per 1,000 Population - | | | |
| (England & Wales) | 16.0 | | 16.0 |
| Stillbirths | Males | 2 | 2 |
| | Females | 4 | 2 |

DEATHS:

| | | | |
|--|------|--|------|
| Death rate per 1,000 Population - | | | |
| (Adjusted) | 10.8 | | 12.6 |
| Death rate per 1,000 Population - | | | |
| (England & Wales) | 11.7 | | 11.6 |
| Infant Mortality (Rate per 1,000 births) | 11.0 | | 11.0 |
| Infant Mortality (Rate per 1,000 births) | | | |
| (England & Wales) | 18.0 | | 18.0 |

PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF DEATH:

| | 1971 | | |
|--|------|----|-----|
| | M. | F. | T. |
| Other Infective and Parasitic Diseases | 1 | - | 1 |
| Malignant Neoplasm, Buccal Cavity, etc., | 1 | - | 1 |
| Malignant Neoplasm, Oesophagus | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Malignant Neoplasm, Intestine | 2 | - | 2 |
| Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus | 8 | 2 | 10 |
| Malignant Neoplasm, Breast | - | 5 | 5 |
| Leukaemia | 1 | - | 1 |
| Other Malignant Neoplasms | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Diabetes Mellitus | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Anaemias | - | 1 | 1 |
| Mental Disorders | 1 | - | 1 |
| Chronic Rheumatic Heart Disease | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Hypertensive Disease | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Ischaemic Heart Disease | 42 | 18 | 60 |
| Other forms of Heart Disease | 3 | 8 | 11 |
| Cerebrovascular Disease | 9 | 5 | 14 |
| Other Diseases of Circulatory system | 3 | 8 | 11 |
| Pneumonia | 9 | 5 | 14 |
| Bronchitis and Emphysema | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| Asthma | 1 | - | 1 |
| Other Diseases of Respiratory System | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Peptic Ulcer | 1 | - | 1 |
| Cirrhosis of Liver | - | 1 | 1 |
| Other Diseases of Digestive System | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Nephritis and Nephrosis | - | 1 | 1 |
| Other complications of Pregnancy, etc., | - | 1 | 1 |
| Congenital Anomalies | 5 | - | 5 |
| Other causes of Perinatal Mortality | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Motor Vehicle Accidents | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| All Other Accidents | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| All Other External Causes | 1 | - | 1 |
| Total all Causes | 119 | 74 | 193 |

INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

Notifications -

| | | | |
|----------------|---|-------------------------------|-----|
| Food Poisoning | 4 | Tuberculosis : Respiratory 2) | 4 |
| | | Other 2) | |
| Dysentery | 8 | Measles | 107 |
| Whooping Cough | 6 | Scarlet Fever | 9 |

PERSONAL HEALTH SERVICES

Area Health Office: 224 Queensway, Bletchley (Tel: 4701)

Ambulance Service: Administered by Bucks. County Council,
stationed at Whalley Drive (Tel: 2565)

Hospitals: Under the Oxford Regional Hospital Board.
Patients treated at Aylesbury and
Northampton. General Practitioners,
Maternity Unit at Whalley Drive.
Outpatients facilities for: Chest Diseases,
Ear, Nose and Throat, Dermatology,
Ophthalmology, Paediatrics, Psychiatry,
Surgery, Gynaecology, Orthopaedics.

Public Health Laboratory: Kimbolton Road, Bedford

Health Visitors }
District Nurses } Area Nursing Officer - Mrs. D. L. Marett
Midwives } (at Area Health Office)

Occupational Therapy Centre: Supervisor - Mrs. Osborne
226 Queensway (Tel: 2073)

Child Health Clinics: Whalley Drive (Tel: 3781)
Methodist Hall, Queensway, and
Katrine Place

Dental Clinic: Whalley Drive (Tel: 3784) Treatment is
available to school children and expectant
mothers. The dentist visits schools
regularly.

Child Guidance Clinic: Whalley Drive (Tel: 8783)
Psychiatrist: Dr. M. Lindsay

Health Education Officer: Mr. T. Watson
(at Area Health Office)

School Health Service: Administered from Area Health Offices.
This service is responsible for examination
of pupils in accordance with the Education
Act, 1944, ascertainment of handicapped
pupils and arranging appropriate treatment.
Vaccination and immunisation is also
arranged for: tuberculosis, polio, tetanus,
diphtheria, measles and rubella.

Family Planning Clinic: Whalley Drive and Katrine Place
(By appointment - Tel: 2285)

Cervical Cytology Clinic: By private doctor or at Whalley Drive
Clinic. (Tel: 4701 for appointment)

Marriage Guidance Council: Appointments for Bletchley Area (Tel: 4500)
Interviews held at Whalley Drive Clinic.

Social Services Dept.,: (Former Welfare, Mental Health, Home
Helps, Childrens' Department)
Area Officer - Mr. D. K. Smith,
224 Queensway (Tel: 4701)

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT

WATER SUPPLY:

The Bucks. Water Board have reported the following information:-

1. The water supply to the Urban District of Bletchley was satisfactory in quantity and quality throughout the year.
2. No contamination of the supply was detected.
3. Typical analyses of the four supplies to the district - Battlesden, Sandhouse, Mid Bucks and Grafham, are set out below.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

| | <u>Battlesden</u> | <u>Sandhouse</u> | <u>Mid Bucks</u> | <u>Grafham</u> |
|------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Appearance | Clear & Bright | Clear & Bright | Clear & Bright | Clear & Bright |
| pH Value | 8.0 | 7.9 | 7.3 | 7.8 |
| Colour | <5 | <5 | <5 | <5 |
| Turbidity | 0.8 | 1.3 | 0.2 | 0.4 |

CHEMICAL EXAMINATION:

| | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Ammonia Nitrogen | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.11 |
| Albuminoid Nitrogen | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.17 |
| Nitrite Nitrogen | 0.002 | 0.003 | 0.002 | 0.003 |
| Nitrate Nitrogen | 0.26 | 0.28 | 4.5 | 2.6 |
| O ₂ absorbed from permanganate | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 1.0 |
| Free CO ₂ | 4 | 5 | 24 | 5 |
| Alkalinity as CaCO ₃ | 157 | 186 | 242 | 156 |
| Carbonate Hardness | 157 | 186 | 242 | 156 |
| Non-Carbonate Hardness | 53 | 43 | 28 | 62 |
| Total Hardness | 210 | 229 | 270 | 218 |
| Total Solids | 260 | 280 | 323 | 526 |
| Calcium, as Ca | 69 | 74 | 104 | 70 |
| Magnesium, as Mg | 9 | 11 | 3 | 11 |
| Sulphate, as SO ₄ | 45 | 40 | 10 | 168 |
| Chloride, as Cl | 16 | 18 | 16 | 59 |
| Silica, as SiO ₂ | 15 | 11 | 16 | 1 |
| Iron, as Fe; Total | 0.10 | 0.25 | 0.01 | 0.06 |
| Fluoride as F | 0.32 | 0.35 | 0.11 | 0.51 |
| Residual Chlorine (at source) | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.45 |
| Conductivity (micromhos/CM ³) | 420 | 453 | 532 | 831 |
| Sodium as Na | 11 | 12 | 9.3 | 97 |
| Potassium as K | 2.3 | 2.4 | 1.2 | 8 |

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

To the Chairman and Members of the Bletchley Urban District Council

Mr. Chairman, Councillors,

I submit the Annual Report on the work of the Public Health Inspectors' Department for 1971 with the thought that to some readers much of what is said, or something very similar, has been said before.

There is perhaps a limit to the ingenuity with which one can serve the same menu year after year, in such a way that the meal continues to be both nourishing and appetising.

Is there nothing new?

Discretionary Improvement Grants were new to the Council and to the staff. As we found from growing experience, it was not just a simple extension of the Standard Grant scheme that we already operate.

Smoke Control Areas, not new to the large progressive local authorities, many of whom are nearing or have finished their programme of complete control, is certainly a new concept for the local citizen and bringing to the Department fresh problems and the knowledge that it is a time consuming though worthwhile project.

General Improvement Areas, a new look given to the previous unsuccessful House Improvement Area scheme by replacing the element of compulsion with improvement of the environment, were mooted by the Development Corporation in the Bletchley Plan being based largely on possibilities suggested by the Department but proving on scrutiny to be improbabilities.

The Shops Act, 1950, a new matter of enforcement for the Council and an entirely new aspect for the staff, yet the Act in itself a seemingly out of date piece of legislation.

There's nothing new?

Well, not in proposals for the reorganisation of local government, but the Government's scrapping of the Royal Commission's single tier proposition brought forth a new two tier system proposal.

Controversy, claim and counter-claim raged throughout the year, first over the White Paper and then the Bill.

After initially facing an extremely serious fragmentation of the service between the new county and district authorities Public Health Inspectors were gratified to see commonsense prevail on the allotment of the majority of their tasks to the lower tier.

As the Press Notice accompanying the Bill puts it - "in allocating these functions, greater emphasis on district responsibility for the environment will provide the basis for a strong team of professional officers at this level."

Our work is essentially concerned with people and the service will continue to be kept readily accessible to the citizen who will naturally look to the district council for the technical assistance and advice he requires.

The increasing complexity in each of our many and varied tasks is leading to specialisation so that in any future local authority organisation environmental health should be seen as a necessary separate discipline.

New on the staff scene was the joining of our new Student Public Health Inspector, Mr. P. H. Winsor and consequent upon the leaving of Mrs. P. Jones, which left a gap at a very busy period, we were pleased to welcome our new Public Health Inspector, Mr. A. R. Jackson.

The year was an extremely active and busy one with many difficulties that a willing and co-operative staff helped to overcome and to whom in conclusion I must thank, together with the Medical Officer of Health, Members of the Health Committee and colleagues in other departments for their able assistance.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

A. James

FOOD

MEAT INSPECTION:

Slaughterhouses are subject to annual licensing to allow them to be used for the slaughtering of animals intended for food purposes.

The condition of a slaughterhouse is governed, amongst other things, by the Slaughterhouse (Hygiene) Regulations, 1958, in respect of the state of the building, its facilities and hygienic practices, and by the Slaughter of Animals (Prevention of Cruelty) Regulations, 1958, governing the treatment and lairing of animals prior to slaughter.

The year commenced with steadily deteriorating conditions at the one private slaughterhouse, but after an undertaking to carry out improvements the licence was renewed.

The early progress expected did not take place, but one could hardly blame the licensee in being reluctant to commit himself to the necessary expenditure for refurbishing the premises whilst uncertainty existed about the future destiny of the area within the context of the land use appraisal currently being carried on.

It was not until after the publication of the Bletchley Plan and approaching the middle of the year that the picture became clear and the licensee able to decide, as he did, to keep his premises intact and to continue the business.

Plans were set in motion for the demolition and renewal of the lairages and gut room and the general improvement of slaughtering facilities.

Building progress was however, painfully slow and the work incomplete as the year ended.

Figures for the number of animals slaughtered and inspected continue to climb and the Table shows that the number involved was 2,565. Nine administration visits and 163 for meat inspection were made during which 18 cwt. of meat and offal was condemned.

There were no recordings for tuberculosis or cysticercosis.

Details of Carcases and Offal Inspected and Parts Condemned

| | Cattle excluding Cows | Cows | Calves | Sheep and Lambs | Pigs |
|---|-----------------------------|------|--------|-----------------------|------|
| Number slaughtered | 183 | 1 | 18 | 1,876 | 487 |
| Number inspected | 183 | 1 | 18 | 1,876 | 487 |
| All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci | | | | | |
| Whole carcases condemned | - | - | - | 6 | - |
| Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned | 30 | - | 3 | 546 | 53 |

The Meat Inspection (Amendment) Regulations, 1971, raised the maximums for charges that a local authority can make for carrying out the inspection of meat at a slaughterhouse.

After due consideration the Health Committee decided to make only minor adjustments in their charges and not to adopt the new maximums.

POULTRY INSPECTION:

It has long been intended to strengthen the legislation apertaining to the slaughter of poultry.

The Slaughter of Poultry Act received Royal Assent in 1967, but was not brought into operation until the beginning of 1970.

Regulations had been promised but none appeared until 1971 for operation commencing in August.

The Slaughter of Poultry (Humane Conditions) Regulations, 1971, contains provisions for securing humane conditions in connection with the slaughter of turkeys and domestic fowl for human consumption.

The chief provisions require that such poultry, while awaiting slaughter must not be subjected to unnecessary pain or distress; they must be slaughtered as soon as practicable and meanwhile protected from bad weather. Other requirements are concerned with slaughter and stunning before slaughter.

In November, a visit was paid to the Department and to the poultry processing factory by one of the Central Government Public Health Advisory Officers, formerly a well known Chief Public Health Inspector.

We were given the news that the operation of poultry processing plants would probably be radically changed by the entry into the European Common Market.

According to the Officer, 350 to 400 million birds are slaughtered annually in this country, all of which will need ante and post-mortem examination in accordance with an E.E.C. directive. In addition, all would have to be eviscerated and the New York dress bird, i.e., undrawn and sold as fresh, which style is produced at the local factory, would no longer be allowed.

It is difficult to see how the directive can be carried out, for as he said, in an average establishment slaughtering about 1,500 birds an hour there will be exactly two and a half seconds to inspect each bird.

Europeanised poultry inspection might improve the general quality, but could not deal with Salmonella carriers. Numbers can be controlled by careful control of plant hygiene and special attention paid to chlorination.

Prescribed Particulars:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| - number of poultry processing premises | 1 |
| - number of visits to such premises | 38 |
| - total number of birds processed during the year | 2,997,010 |
| - types of birds processed | Broilers |
| - percentage of birds rejected as unfit for human consumption | 1.27 |
| - weight of poultry condemned (lbs) | 105,200 |

UNFIT FOOD:

Sixty-eight visits were paid to various premises to make an examination and to give a judgement on canned and other foods as to fitness for human consumption.

More than a normal number of calls were made to school kitchens to examine fish. Various stages of decomposition were encountered and on most occasions as the fish was delivered in a frozen state the deterioration was not discovered until after thawing had taken place.

An improvement of the situation appears to have been brought about after sending cautionary letters to the suppliers.

Other calls for our services ranged from examining meat consignments at the town's large meat products factory to giving advice on the contents of a domestic deep-freezer which had broken down.

| <u>Total weight of food condemned:</u> | <u>tons</u> | <u>cwts</u> | <u>lbs</u> |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Meat at the slaughterhouse | | 18 | 1 |
| Meat at retail and other premises | | 11 | 22 |
| Cooked meat and meat products | 4 | 0 | 54 |
| Canned meats | | | 28 |
| Other canned foods | | | 65 |
| Fish | | 2 | 50 |
| Frozen foods due to cabinet breakdown | 1 | 2 | 77 |
| Other foods | <u>2</u> | <u>16</u> | <u>72</u> |
| Total: | <u>9</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>33</u> |

FOOD COMPLAINTS:

The number of complaints received showed a marginal increase over that for the previous year and included the usual pattern of mould, foreign substances and milk bottles not thoroughly clean and ranging through the unjustified, the justifiable but without legal remedy or so trivial as to require merely a caution, to the serious and warranting the taking of court proceedings.

In searching for preventable factors one encounters amongst the many reasons resulting in these grievances inadequate control methods, human failure and mechanical faults.

Human failure is pleaded often enough to cover not merely a culpability of unknown origin, but active failure and inexcusable errors. If only the operative on the inspection line had not diverted his gaze those few seconds; if the detector machine had only been properly maintained; if the smoking food handler had only been obeying the rules; if only the customer had not used the milk bottle as a handy container for some other substance. If only people had been more conscious of their responsibilities many of the matters complained of would not have occurred, for even where they were not active in the commission or omission they had acted in an irresponsible manner.

Intensive mechanisation and automation brings problems. Speeds of operation often make inspection and control difficult and constant scrutiny at high speeds brings understandable strain on personnel.

A really satisfactory mould inhibitor, harmless and effective which would reduce the incidence of mouldy food complaints is long overdue and would be welcomed in many quarters.

Table of Complaints:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mouldy bacon pack (2) | Insects in milk(2) |
| Metal in Chocolate truffle | Decomposing bacon joint |
| Glass in milk | Unsound frozen cod steak |
| Milk bottles (5) | Mouldy pancakes |
| Worms in fish | Mouldy pasty |
| Mould in trifle mix packet | Mouldy cakes |
| Mouldy potato crisps | Decomposing luncheon meat |
| Mould in jar of meat spread | Mould in lemonade |
| Mouldy sausage rolls | Stale cornflakes |
| Tainted beef | Can opening key in cornbeef |
| Stone in malt loaf | Grease in cakes (2) |
| Mouldy bread (3) | Screw in can of beans |
| Mouldy cheese (2) | Finger nail in pie |
| Mould in can of ham | Glass in margarine |
| Bitter tasting cream | Stale malt loaf |
| Mouldy sausages | Mouldy chocolate |
| Mouldy pies (2) | Unusual taste to cornbeef |
| Unsound potatoes | Unusual taste to milk |

Altogether forty-seven complaints, involving 139 visits and interviews and consuming much time in investigation and correspondence.

Two prosecutions were taken, one in respect of milk containing a substance consisting of old cream skin and fly debris and the other for selling three mouldy pies.

In the latter case, the vendor ignored advice on stock rotation, coding and keeping goods too long given to him during a visit to the shop in the week prior to the offence, as well as advisory pamphlets sent out to all food trading concerns a few days before.

Fines respectively of £30 and £20 were imposed by the court for these breaches of the law.

Early in the year the call for 'date stamping' perishable food received a renewed impetus by the Sunday Times Magazine. In a long report, space was devoted to incidents in which customers had bought food alleged to be "not of the nature, substance or quality demanded". Other national newspapers echoed the new call which was also taken up by a group of M.P.'s.

In 1964, the Food Standards Committee published a report on food labelling, in which consideration was given to date marking pre-wrapped foodstuffs. The Committee felt in many ways that it was an attractive proposition, but not practical since so much depended on the quality and freshness of the food used in the preparation and on the conditions under which food is transported, stored and displayed for sale.

In the same year the Consumer Council in the magazine "Which!" had thought the matter through and come to a similar conclusion.

The onus for ensuring that goods sold are in a proper condition rests initially in law on the retailer, and in order to remind those concerned we followed our annual practice of circulating to all food businesses our advisory pamphlets on the keeping of certain perishable foods and the adoption of simple coding systems, together with a request that they should obtain and familiarise themselves with manufacturers' production codes.

We received several messages that the latter were often undecipherable and that some suppliers were unwilling to divulge information on the subject.

Amongst the many arguments on the open-date coding of food is one that a large wastage of food would occur by the consumer always taking the freshest article yet leaving perfectly good though older products on the shelf. Another argument, however, is the enormous problem of the shop keeper faced with dozens of widely varying coded packs, if coded at all, and never knowing the stage of freshness or the "life" of the article inside.

The practice of "sale or return" often denied by many suppliers but undoubtedly rampant in the trade, affords the unscrupulous ample opportunity for the transference of stale goods from one business to another.

The renewed interest in the subject caused the responsible Minister to announce that he was asking the Food Standards Committee to review the whole matter again.

FOOD HYGIENE:

New premises where food is being prepared for consumption continue to be added to the general list.

New factory canteens and school kitchens have been recorded and work of alteration and improvement supervised at shops and cafes.

Two butchers shops had much needed alterations carried out and a new firm selling deep-frozen foods established itself in the town.

Sleeping in certain food rooms is not allowed by the law and steps had to be taken at a town centre snack bar to prohibit the practice by a staff member who lacked proper living accommodation.

The amended and renewed Food Hygiene (General) Regulations, 1970, came into force at the beginning of March. When circulating the trade with the advisory pamphlets mentioned previously, we took the opportunity of including resumés of the new requirements.

When plans of new or altered premises are submitted to the Council we scrutinise them and bring any discrepancies to the attention of the person submitting.

We are often faced with the problem of designers concerned more with aesthetical values than essential hygienic facilities and practices. For example, a wash-hand basin with hot and cold water in a kitchen, to be used for personal cleanliness, is what the law and good practice requires and probably what any layman would expect, yet many designers omit them and then plead lack of space or cost when reminded.

Food Hygiene (General) Regulations, 1970

The number of food premises subject to the regulations grouped in categories of trade carried on are:-

| | |
|---|----|
| Bakers | 1 |
| Butchers | 12 |
| Catering establishments (cafes, canteens, etc.) | 78 |
| Confectioners (cakes, sweets, etc.) | 20 |
| Fish Shops (wet and fried) | 6 |
| Food factories and warehouses | 11 |
| General food shops | 33 |
| Greengrocers | 6 |
| Licensed premises | 28 |

Visits, inspections and interviews made in connection with premises, stalls and vehicles numbered 449; thirty-two informal notices were served and twenty-five complied with.

BACTERIOLOGICAL SAMPLING:

Forty visits were made for the purpose of obtaining samples for submission to the Public Health Laboratory for examination and report.

Ice-cream

Number of samples:

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Grade 1 = 6 | Grade 2 = 4 |
| Grade 3 = 3 | Grade 4 = 2 |

Water

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------|---|--------------|
| Swimming pools | - | 4 samples | - | satisfactory |
| Tap | - | 2 samples | - | satisfactory |

Poultry factory
processing water - 9 samples - 7 satisfactory
2 reported Salmonella
contaminations

PUBLIC HEALTH AND HOUSINGGENERAL:

A conduit, buried in the ground, its position often indeterminate and its meandering's uncertain, conducting a generally liquid and semi-solid waste from a domestic, commercial or industrial source towards a point of disposal, its purpose and efficiency mostly taken for granted, its ownership sometimes in doubt and often misunderstood - is usually described as a drain- or perhaps a sewer - or maybe a private sewer or a public sewer.

This is a situation commonly faced by the Department when blockages and defects are reported or unwanted smells are traced to some obstruction in a system preventing the free flow of the contents.

A common fallacy amongst those doing the reporting is that somehow or other it must be the Council's responsibility to put right what has gone wrong and convincing a person otherwise, who in the meantime might be subjected to a sewage-flooded garden, back yard or drive or even a shop, is no mean task for an Inspector to face.

Nevertheless, a 'drain' is the term applied to a system of underground pipework serving one particular property for the whole of its length no matter what other property it passes under. It belongs to and is the responsibility of the owner of the property it serves.

A 'sewer' combines two or more 'drains' but may be 'public' or 'private'. As with a drain, a private sewer belongs to the several owners it serves, but trying to convince the man who is not affected, but whose sewage is contributing to a neighbour's problem, of this fact, is usually a difficult undertaking.

Sixty-six visits were made by the Department in the course of investigating, tracing and obtaining remedies for such problems.

Several unwanted smell complaints were enquired into. These included some to do with the keeping of animals, one which we suspect was due to combustion products of a gas fire leaking through a defective chimney and one which used to be the centre of complaints some years ago.

The latter, a peculiar acrid smell from a caramel works, on this occasion being described as a "gooey smoke", arises from the emission of spent steam from part of the processes.

Investigation showed that the chimney stack which collected steam from various parts of the plant to discharge it at a high point had been dismantled because of corrosion.

The smell, however, occurred only during the mornings and only caused an annoyance when the wind was in a certain direction, or when climatic conditions prevented good dispersal.

In an interview with the firm's management we were told that before merely making a replacement of the chimney, they were conducting experiments to try and find the cause of both the smell and the corrosion.

Research into methods of destroying undesirable odours can be a difficult, expensive and sometimes an impossible task and even if a solution can be found often the equipment necessary to do the job is very costly.

Because the problems exist on a national basis the Department of the Environment appointed during the year a Working Party on Industrial Odours which commenced its task by requesting from all local authorities knowledge of particular problems and the means, if any had been found, of overcoming them.

In our report to the Working Party we included the particular problem related above.

Contractors vehicles speeding along a building site access road caused a dust nuisance to the annoyance of nearby inhabitants. The particular road was only being used temporarily and soon went out of use, meanwhile after an approach from the Department the road was kept wetted to keep down the dust and vehicle speeds were reduced.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

Included in the Infectious Disease figures previously set out are individual occurrences of food poisoning.

Two persons from one family were affected by Salmonella typhi-murium and one of these, an adult, was found to be employed as a food handler.

Steps had to be taken to exclude this person from such work and as there was no other job that the person could be transferred to we were obliged to arrange compensation for loss of earnings. It took nearly three weeks before approval could be given for a return to employment after the necessary number of tests had proved negative.

An investigation was carried out at a local school where the Head-mistress was peturbed at the number of children absent through sickness. Tests were made in respect of sixteen children but the cause was not identified.

It was noted that several cases of Sonne Dysentery were confined to a particular group of houses. During the investigation it was ascertained that there was a food handler in one of the affected families, but he was already absent from work through a different illness so that no exclusion action was necessary.

HOUSING:

During the year action was taken on houses in our potential slum clearance programme.

One particular unfit house which was not on our list came to light through an enquiry. The dwelling was vacant and a prospective purchaser wished to know if he could get an improvement grant. The subsequent inspection revealed conditions which from the external appearance had not been suspected.

Not long after the Demolition Order was made a fire spreading from nearby properties destroyed the thatched roof of the house.

At the end of the year the position regarding action on houses unfit for human habitation was:-

| | |
|---|----|
| Number of Demolition Orders made | 16 |
| Number of Closing Orders made | 0 |
| Houses demolished | 0 |
| Houses under Demolition Order | |
| - still occupied | 4 |
| - vacant, demolition pending | 17 |
| Number rehoused - units | 4 |
| - persons | 9 |
| Unfit houses, subsequently made fit after undertakings accepted | 1 |

IMPROVEMENT:

In addition to Standard Grants, we were able to accept applications from the beginning of the year for Improvement (Discretionary) Grants.

The term "improvement" in the minds of many people covers most things as we began to find out when we began to deal with enquiries, for example - adding a room extension or a bedroom, putting in a new window, repairing or renewing gutters, removing a wall between two rooms to make a modern style through-room. Yet these are not matters which the grant is meant for and we had several disgruntled enquirers feeling they were being denied their due entitlement.

The Improvement Grant is meant to bring older houses up to a good modern standard by providing them with items which are lacking, such as damp-proof courses, bathrooms and hot water systems, inside W.C.'s and enlarging very small kitchens, and where a house is being rehabilitated in this fashion worn out parts might be renewed or replaced.

A thorough-going job has to be done so that on completion it complies with the Twelve-point Standard and has a minimum life expectancy of thirty years.

Grants cannot be given for repairs or replacements alone nor where the cost does not exceed £100, but if plans, estimates and schedules of work receive approval the grant can be up to a maximum of £1,000.

The Housing Act, 1969, swept away conditions attached to grants. To many of those who administer the scheme this is a drawback for there is nothing to prevent the speculator from buying up old properties, modernising them with the aid of a grant and reselling on the open market at much enhanced values.

Government spokesmen have said that they do not think much of this goes on and in any case they are not too much bothered about it, for it is the saving of the general housing stock that they are interested in. A Council had the exercise of its discretion available if it needs, they say, but who is to know beforehand what an applicant's intentions are?

During the year we examined the situation as to General Improvement Areas. These are areas, predominantly residential in character where living conditions ought to be improved by the modernisation and repair of dwellings and the improvement of their environs.

No upper or lower limits to size are set but the conception expects something more than a group of a dozen or a score of houses being involved.

The Bletchley Plan indicated three areas for treatment as General Improvement Areas. These were based to some extent on areas suggested by the Department as possibilities, but no more than that.

A more fuller investigation into the matter with colleagues in other Departments included a visit to a large town already involved in such projects and also discussions with officers from the Department of the Environment.

Our findings were that one of the suggested areas contained eminently improvable dwellings but no scope for environmental improvement. The second contained a limited opportunity for environmental treatment, but the houses themselves ranged from very good to poor quality. The third area could not be said to be predominantly residential nor did it lend itself to environmental improvement.

These conclusions, supplemented with the advice that the areas would be better served by more publicity on grants was being submitted to the Council as the year ended and later accepted.

Some considerable time was devoted to Rectory Cottages over an application for a grant towards renovating a flat over the proposed museum. The structure is very worn out with many delapidations and we were not at all happy that the work would produce a dwelling acceptable to modern standards. For instance, external single brick walls in which we had measured dampness, were to have no additional protection provided and some of the floors were sagged in places up to four inches.

We were relieved of the problem when grants for work on the whole of the building were forthcoming from sources other than the Improvement Grant Scheme.

| Standard Grants | Owner occupied | Tenanted |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| 1. Applications received | 16 | 12 |
| Applications approved | 16 | 12 |
| Number of houses improved | 14 | 9 |
| 2. Amount paid in grants £4,456.37 | | |

| Improvement Grants | Owner occupied | Tenanted |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| 1. Applications received | 9 | - |
| Applications approved | 9 | - |
| Number of houses improved | 4 | - |
| 2. Amount paid in grants £438.37 | | |

QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATES:

The Housing Act, 1969, introduced a new system of governing rents of privately rented dwellings which are brought up to a satisfactory standard.

Where a house which is subject to a controlled tenancy is provided with all the standard amenities, is in good repair and is fit for human habitation the tenancy may be converted to a regulated tenancy.

To secure this change a landlord has to apply to the local authority for a Qualification Certificate as to the condition of the house.

If a house does not comply with specified conditions, but in his application the landlord gives details of the works which he proposes to carry out the local authority may grant a Certificate of Provisional Approval.

With the certificate issued by the local authority a landlord makes application to the Rent Officer for the fixing of the fair rent.

The procedure is complicated and as predicted in the last annual report, after some continued activity at the beginning, applications fell off as the year proceeded.

Housing Act, 1969, - Part III

- (a) Where standard amenities were existing
Qualification Certificates issued 18
- (b) Where standard amenities were lacking
Certificates of Provisional Approval issued 9
Qualification Certificates issued 6

Visits, inspections, interviews and surveys, etc., Public Health and Infectious Diseases = 517: Housing = 178: Improvement/Standard Grants = 274: Qualification Certificates = 45.

AIR POLLUTION

It was indeed fortunate that the winter periods at either end of the year were not severe so that the shortage of smokeless fuel had less of an impact than expected.

A Circular put out in the middle of the year advised local authorities that supplies would be expected to be more than adequate by the Spring of 1972 and that programmes for Smoke Control Areas should be pursued with renewed vigour.

We had already anticipated this situation and made a start on the inspection of premises in our first area, the project of which is more fully discussed below.

The value of measures taken against air pollution can be seen in statistic released.

The average ground level concentration for smoke in the U.K. during 1970/71 was 19.7% lower than that for 1968/69 and 58.4% lower than for 1960/61.

Equivalent figures for sulphur dioxide are 10.8% and 26.7%.

A lady worried about her health complained to us about a sulphur smell from the brickworks, although she lived some two miles away.

In explaining that we had no jurisdiction in the matter she was nevertheless informed of the problems associated with such works and even went to the extent of arranging and accompanying her on a visit to the works, which she appeared to enjoy.

Several complaints were investigated concerning the indiscriminate burning of rubbish, car tyres and garden bonfires.

At a relatively new factory an incinerator had proved incapable of tackling adequately the amounts of wood waste being produced. The installation of a much larger and more elaborate incinerator had been started the year previously. Its commissioning early in 1971 showed that with equipment of good design, clean air problems can be overcome.

Sadly not all purpose built equipment succeeds, for the incinerator at another factory has not lived up to its expectations. Renewal of the burnt out lining and advice from the manufacturer has not solved the problem of intermittent bursts of dark smoke. Observations of the chimney showed that transgressions were taking place from time to time and the factory management were warned of the situation.

We continued to derive data from daily sampling of the atmosphere at our two survey sites.

Some trouble was experienced with one of the Daily Smoke/SO² Gauges when the measured amounts of air drawn through for sampling began to drop below acceptable limits.

Checks were made of the apparatus to ensure no blockages had occurred and after the maintenance and changing of the electrical pump had made no difference we finally diagnosed the trouble as being faulty recording of the meter.

The results gathered over the year are shown on the graph set out where it will be seen that the winter season normally has the highest pollution levels.

A drawback of this type of instrument in assessing only mean levels is that it masks any incidents involving peak level concentrations occurring over short periods. Such levels can only be monitored by more elaborate instruments sampling on a continuous hourly basis.

SMOKE CONTROL AREA:

At 31st December, 1971, there were in England and Wales, 3,675 Orders in operation, confirmed or awaiting decision affecting 1,062,318 acres of land and 5,189,783 premises.

Enjoined in these statistics is the Bletchley (No. 1) Smoke Control Order, 1971, which was submitted to the Department of the Environment for confirmation in the last month of the year.

So ended, so to speak, the preliminaries of the smoke control proposals for the district.

It may be remembered that the project began in 1967 with a submission to the then Ministry of Housing & Local Government for Provisional Approval of the first area.

Before giving its approval the Ministry required to know what the Council's intentions were regarding the whole of the district, reasoning understandably, that it would be unfair to commit one section of the public to the effects of smoke control whilst having no plans regarding the rest.

A scheme was prepared for the whole of the urban district and a provisional programme produced which proposed one area annually over ten years.

Provisional Approval of the programme and first area was granted, but in the light of the recurring shortages of solid smokeless fuel it appeared futile to proceed at the time.

Microgrammes per Cubic Metre

200

100

No. 1 Gauge

DAILY SMOKE /SO₂ GAUGE

No. 2 Gauge

Jan
1971

June

Jan
1972

Jan
1971

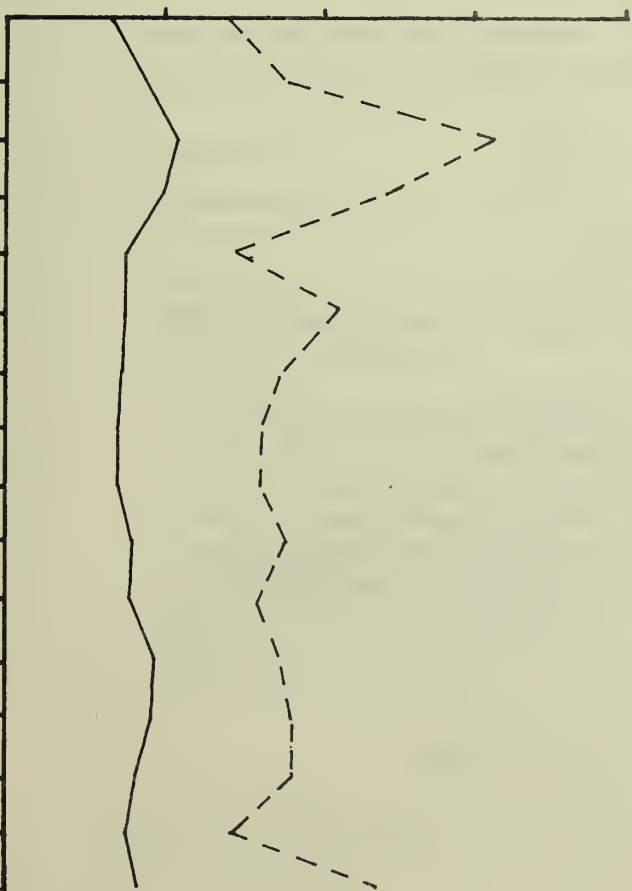
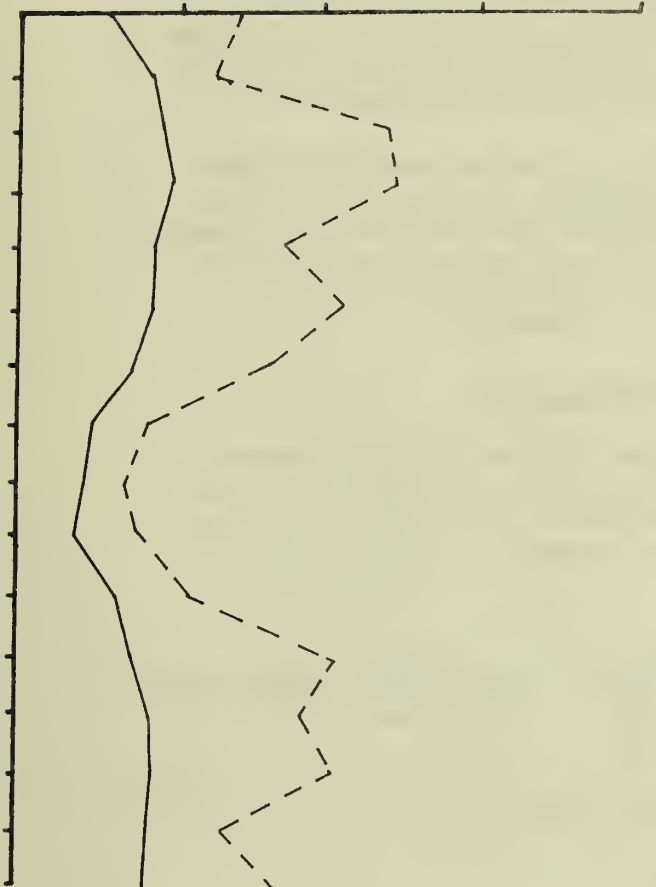
June

Jan
1972

S M O K E

----- Highest daily reading
— Average monthly concentration

400
300
200
100



S U L P H U R D I O X I D E

With the assurance that supply problems would be overcome by 1972, we began in late Spring to carry out the survey of dwellings and other properties in the Water Eaton district.

Visiting the various premises, explaining the reasons for smoke control, recording heating arrangements and advising on alternative forms and explaining the grants which would be available proved to be a time consuming exercise. So much so that the survey, coupled with the loss of an Inspector through resignation, seriously curtailed inspections in other spheres of our work.

Subsequent compilation of statistics, estimates, maps and Orders also took up much time so that we were nearly at the end of the year before being able to submit the Order, and the new year saw us arranging general advertisements in the area affected and awaiting confirmation.

Set out below are brief details of the Order:-

The Bletchley (No. 1) Smoke Control Order, 1971

Situation: South-eastern section of the district bounded by the District Boundary, the main railway line and the centre lines of Water Eaton Road, Mill Road and the Water Eaton Stream.

Area: In acres 455

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|-------|------------------------------|
| Premises: | private dwellings | 444 | (+ 426 under construction) |
| | council dwellings | 1,050 | (+ 1,150 under construction) |
| | industrial premises | 32 | |
| | commercial premises | 8 | |
| | other premises | 8 | |

Date of operation: 1st November, 1972

Attendance on complaints, smoke observations, visits to plants, interviews, etc., amounted to 103: pollution measurement gauges = 520: smoke control areas = 564.

Notifications of proposals to install furnaces numbered twelve and applications for approval of Chimney Heights, three.

FACTORIES

The Factories Act, 1961, is concerned with the health, safety and welfare of employees.

Enforcement of the Act is partly the responsibility of local authorities but mainly by H. M. Factory Inspectorate.

The duties of local authorities consist of administering the provisions relating to cleanliness, overcrowding, temperature, ventilation and drainage of floors in any factory in which mechanical power is not used and for those relating to sanitary accommodation in all factories.

PRESCRIBED PARTICULARS ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THEFACTORIES ACT, 1961PART I OF THE ACT

1) INSPECTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE PROVISIONS AS TO HEALTH:

| Premises | Number on Register | Inspect- ions | Written Notices | Occupiers Prosecuted |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| (i) Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities | 11 | 8 | - | - |
| (ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority | 137 | 34 | 2 | - |
| (iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority | 13 | 10 | - | - |
| Total | 161 | 52 | 2 | - |

2) CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND:

| | Number of cases in which defects were found | | | | Number of cases in which prose- cutions were instituted |
|---|--|---------------|------------------|------------------|---|
| | Found | Reme- died | Referred | | |
| | | | To H.M. Insp. | By H.M. Insp. | |
| Want of cleanliness (S.1) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Overcrowding (S.2) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Unreasonable Temperature (S.3) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Inadequate Ventilation (S.4) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sanitary Conveniences (S.7) | | | | | |
| (a) Insufficient | - | - | - | - | - |
| (b) Unsuitable or defective | 5 | 2 | - | 3 | - |
| (c) Not separate for sexes | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 5 | 2 | - | 3 | - |

PART VIII OF THE ACT
(Sections 133 and 134)

OUTWORK

| Nature of Work | No. of Outworkers in August list required by Section 133(1)(c) | No. of cases of default in sending to the Council | No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists | No. of instances of work in un-wholesome premises | Notices served | Prosecutions |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|---|----------------|--------------|
| Wearing Apparel Making, etc. | 37 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Stuffed Toys Making of | 25 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Brushes Making of | 13 | - | - | - | - | - |

WORKING CONDITIONS IN OFFICES & SHOPS

It was with regret that we were not able to achieve as many general inspections of premises as we would have wished during the year, but this was largely affected by our efforts on smoke control area work and partly due to the loss of an Inspector for part of the year.

In 1969, the Department of Employment put out a letter to local authorities on how and when to carry out inspections in the field.

Seeing that the profession had been carrying out a wide variety of inspections and surveys for over a century many Public Health Inspectors looked on this advice as an affront, yet it was most likely intended as a hint to those local authorities with insufficient staff to do the job.

The letter suggested that the four year inspection cycle aimed at by H.M. Factory Inspectorate should be the endeavour of all local authorities, but it omitted to mention whether that body did actually and consistently achieve its target.

The aim is not unreasonable and if anything rather on the low side, but in common with other spheres where objectives are accountable, achievements can only be accomplished within the manpower resources available.

We have once fallen below this magic figure of 25% per year, but we have kept pace with the discovery of new and changing employers responsible for complying with the Act.

The total number of these employers and premises on the Register, besides being subject to the inevitable changes and additions of a fast developing town such as ours, is gathering momentum and we all know that a big increase in the next few years is a solid fact.

Total number of visits of all kinds by Inspectors to Registered Premises = 156.

Ten informal notices were served and four complied with and investigations were carried out in respect of four accident notifications.

OFFICES, SHOPS & RAILWAY PREMISES ACT, 1963REGISTRATIONS AND GENERAL INSPECTIONS

| Class of Premises | Number of premises registered during the year | Number of registered premises at end of year | Number of registered premises receiving a general inspection during the year |
|--|---|--|--|
| Offices | 13 | 101 | 19 |
| Retail Shops | 9 | 139 | 28 |
| Wholesale shops, Warehouses | 2 | 11 | 4 |
| Catering establishments open to public, canteens | 1 | 17 | 8 |
| Fuel storage depots | - | 1 | - |
| TOTAL | 25 | 269 | 59 |

ANALYSIS OF RECORDED PARTICULARS OF PERSONS EMPLOYEDIN REGISTERED PREMISES BY WORKPLACE

| Class of workplace | Number of Persons employed |
|--|----------------------------|
| Offices | 1,036 |
| Retail Shops | 798 |
| Wholesale departments, Warehouses | 79 |
| Catering establishments open to public | 136 |
| Canteens | 9 |
| Fuel storage depots | 2 |
| | Total 2,060 |

TOTAL MALES 979
TOTAL FEMALES 1,081

ANALYSIS OF CONTRAVENTIONS

| Section Number of Contraventions found | | | Section Number of Contraventions found | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|--|--|----|
| 4 | Cleanliness | 4 | 14 | Seats (Sedentary workers) | - |
| 5 | Overcrowding | - | 15 | Eating Facilities | - |
| 6 | Temperature | 5 | 16 | Floors, passage and stairs | 1 |
| 7 | Ventilation | 1 | 17 | Fencing exposed parts of machinery | - |
| 8 | Lighting | 3 | 18 | Protection of young persons from dangerous machinery | - |
| 9 | Sanitary Conveniences | 7 | 19 | Training of young persons working at dangerous machinery | - |
| 10 | Washing Facilities | 1 | 23 | Prohibition of heavy work | - |
| 11 | Supply of drinking water | 3 | 24 | First aid general provisions | 5 |
| 12 | Clothing accommodation | 4 | 50 | Posting of Abstracts of the Act | 5 |
| 13 | Sitting facilities | 1 | | | |
| | | | | TOTAL | 40 |

PEST CONTROL

The outstanding problem left over from the previous year was the nuisance being caused at most of the Reema flat blocks by the fouling of window cills and doorways by feral pigeons.

After a report to the Committee, two firms had been invited to submit quotations for carrying out work to solve the problem and we directed each firm on their survey.

One firm intended to tackle the problem in the same fashion that we had ourselves previously attempted by the use of baited cage traps on roof tops.

The other firm proposed to shoot the birds at night from their roosting ledges. Apprehension about this method caused us to make some enquiries and we found that a successful operation was being carried out in a nearby large town. As the quotation was very much cheaper this firm was awarded the job.

Two men, one with a powerful light and the other armed with a .22 air rifle made their rounds of the flats at about midnight. The task was spread over a few weeks, calls being made only once or twice a week so that the birds not taken would re-establish their nightly roosting places.

With well over a hundred birds destroyed the exercise was very successful and only the odd pigeon seen afterwards.

It is common in areas where pigeon flocks have been reduced for birds from adjacent feeding areas to move in and repeat the problem.

To try and prevent this the firm mentioned first above, being specialists in the work, were given the task by another department of the Council of treating all the roosting sites on the flats with bird repellent strips. The principle of this method is to lay tactile jelly-like strips along window cills so as to make the cill an insecure landing place for the bird and so deterring further roosting.

So far this also appears to have been successful and no more complaints have been received.

The usual crop of insect complaints were made and help and advice given on eradication except that in the case of ants where we had to try and curtail the increasing time being spent.

It seems that more and more people expect us to deal with their ant problems when really they are mainly garden pests, so we had to restrict our help to where the problem was entirely indoors.

Most ant nuisances originate from a nest outdoors and the answer is to locate and destroy it.

Curiously, on one of the Council's newest estates several complaints were received about fleas in the houses. One lady brought in, stuck to sellotape, between forty and fifty that she had caught.

We believed that cats or dogs were spreading the problem but in one or two cases there were no such animals connected with the house.

A serious infestation by cockroaches occurred at a school. They were not the usual type encountered, but were the American cockroach that had been used by the school for study and through insufficient precautions allowed to escape. They became established in the canteen where hundreds were seen in a floor cavity. An elaborate treatment was carried out and a watch kept for some weeks afterwards and it appeared that eradication was complete.

Wasps' nests were in abundance during the year, the Rodent Officer dealing with and destroying some thirty-seven nests. Two nests within weeks of each other caused the Council's senior official some headaches for parts of his dwelling had to be dismantled to gain access for removal. A similar exercise had to be carried out at the Swimming Pool where the nest was located in the foyer ceiling and the wasps causing some distress amongst young visitors.

Domestic bees kept at one of the schools swarmed and caused alarm amongst nearby dwellers. As it was nearing the summer holidays the Rodent Officer arranged for collecting the swarm and keeping them during the period.

We confine our activities on pests usually to insects that are potentially harmful or hazardous and to rodents. If we did otherwise there would be no limit to the calls upon our time and therefore the more important from the public health point of view would not be adequately tackled.

One unusual complaint concerned something that could possibly be said to be linked with the Rodent Officer's work but on a higher plane. The subject was bats congregating under the eaves of a house which the Rodent Officer dealt with successfully.

The rodent destruction service was continued satisfactorily during the year offering assistance free to domestic properties and for a fee to others. Checks were made at regular intervals on all the premises under contract agreement and at the Council's sewage works and refuse tip. The twice yearly sewer treatment was carried out, the results indicating very little infestation.

One mystery, which remained unsolved occurred at a general provisions shop under contract. Certain food, sometimes in boxes of made-up orders, were being nibbled at and several times hoards of food were discovered under fitments, on one occasion nuts and another occasion, potatoes. On one week-end a tracking dust, using flour, was laid over the floor of the rear store but it was unsuccessful in tracing the intruder. A search around the exterior of the shop revealed no way in, but a hole in one of the interior walls was blocked up and there has been no recurrence since.

Supplemental to the Rodent Officer's work set out below, 71 visits were recorded by Inspectors for purposes of a supervisory nature or as a part of routine inspection.

A total of 220 visits were made in connection with other pests.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949

| | Type of Property | | |
|--|------------------|--------------|-------|
| | Non-Agricultural | Agricultural | Total |
| Total number of visits to properties inspected as a result of Notification | 660 | - | 660 |
| Total number of visits to properties inspected in the course of survey under the Act | 2,924 | 22 | 2,946 |
| Revisits | | | 1,003 |

NOISE

One of the unwanted products of modern progress is noise and almost every where communities are having to face an increase in amount and volume.

By its very nature the problem is one which can best be tackled providing there is a framework of sound legislation.

Britain has taken some progressive steps towards dealing with the problem but there is still a long way to go.

The subject was investigated in depth by the Wilson Committee which produced reports in 1962 and 1963, yet we are still left coping with the problem by a largely weak Act brought out in 1960.

The subject of new measures is still being considered by the Noise Advisory Council set up in 1970 "to study further the working of the 1960 Noise Abatement Act; to formulate proposals for strengthening it; and to report", and there are hopes for a worthwhile outcome in the shape of a new Act with effective controls.

During the year seven complaints were dealt with including one long standing case. The latter concerned a factory, situated in a residential area, and a particularly noisy machine which annoyed the occupier of the adjacent dwelling.

At the end of the previous year we were at the stage, after having served an Abatement Notice, of waiting to go to Court upon the firm's non-compliance, to apply for a Nuisance Order. The firm had continued to take certain steps to overcome the problem but not sufficient in our view. However, when the case was heard the Magistrates did not agree and after visiting both the factory and the dwelling to experience the problem themselves they decided to deny the application.

Noise affects different people in different way, some are disturbed by quite minor sounds yet others can put up with what are normally excessive.

One complaint concerning a noisy machine heard during the night took some time to trace because of its intermittent character and then only after several late evening excursions around factory estates. When we found the culprit it must have been nearly a mile away from the complainant's house and one would have thought from its position, more annoying to people living closer. The cause, we discovered, was the lack of a silencer on a refrigeration plant motor sited on the roof of the factory. The silencer had burnt out and a replacement was awaited, meanwhile the exhaust was being masked by an old oil drum for safety, hence the noise.

A domestic complaint revealed the practice of a local firm in giving out sewing work when enquiry disclosed an industrial sewing machine in the adjacent dwelling. Discussion with the firm resulted in replacement with a more modern machine and securing it on resilient mountings.

Heavy earth moving vehicles removing spoil at the brickworks claypit was another source of complaint. With the wind blowing towards an estate of private houses the noise from the several machines working from dawn to dusk every day troubled several people. It appeared that the complainants were prepared to accept the noise at normal working times but not in the evenings and at week-ends. When interviewed, the contractor stated that the more time he could put in each day whilst the weather held good the sooner he would be finished and the problem cease and in fact this is what happened.

All other complaints concerned neighbours and their noisy dogs; such cases call for tact and are extremely difficult to deal with.

One of our problems in the past has been the lack of means to measure noise. Sound Level Meters are expensive items of equipment and we had for sometime been contemplating with neighbouring authorities the possibility of sharing an instrument between us.

In conjunction with Wolverton and the two Newport Pagnell authorities we invited demonstrations from two of the few firms who supply suitable meters. Our decision in the end, instead of buying one very expensive and elaborate meter was to purchase two simpler models so that each department would be able to borrow either.

Fifty-four visits and interviews were recorded in dealing with the above.

PETROLEUM

Work proposed the previous year on a new Self-Service Station was not started until the latter part of the year under review.

There had been much revising of plans by the architects who kindly invited us on a tour of similar sites where in one large town we saw a large purpose built site with about a dozen pumps arranged under a gigantic circular canopy and on the same site car washing facilities and a supermarket.

The station was to be the first in our district, but progress was slow and we were nowhere near completion by the end of the year.

It was fortunate that arrangements were able to be made to keep the station still operating otherwise a lot of business would have been lost.

A proposal for another Self-Service Station included facilities for unattended operation and upon recommendation, only the facilities under control when open were approved. And at the end of the year yet a third proposal for an Attended Self-Service Filling Station was being looked at.

The discovery, a day late, that a petrol spillage had occurred resulted in a warning to the Licensee for failure to notify.

About forty gallons were involved and the investigation traced the cause to a faulty valve on the delivery tanker.

Another incident involving licensed premises was an explosion and fire at a factory which uses Toluene in its processes.

The incident occurred at a point where the Toluene was mixed with other substances and the cause, though not conclusively established, was thought to be static electricity.

Fortunately no one was injured and since the Licence is restricted to the keeping of petroleum, in other words storing, and the event occurred through use, there was no violation of the Licence. Petroleum substances in "use" are the concern of H.M. Factory Inspectorate.

A fire at another factory where a licensed store existed destroyed about half the building, but a check revealed that the store was not involved.

One application to install an underground tank and associated pump failed because it could not meet the Council's requirements.

Ullage tests were carried out on three old tanks and nitrogen pressure tests on another two old tanks - all were satisfactory. Three other discontinued tanks were filled in with a sand/cement slurry.

Approvals were given to three new Licences, four transfers of Licences and three proposals for alterations.

Six Licences ceased and at the end of the year forty-eight Licences were on issue involving over 210,000 gallons of petroleum spirits or mixtures.

All premises were inspected prior to Licence renewal and these, together with visits for routine matters, tank testing, supervising new work, discussions on plans and other interviews totalled 307.

Forty-six informal notices were served and all complied with.

THE SHOPS ACT, 1950

A complaint to the Council concerning an alleged infringement of the Sunday Trading law was curiously co-incidental to the discovery that the Council were about to have transferred to it the enforcement of this Act.

The complaint was investigated, although at the time the Council had no jurisdiction in the matter and the allegation found groundless.

However, during our enquiries the fact was uncovered that the Bucks. County Council were about to relinquish the duty to enforce the Act.

It appeared that local authorities with a population of 20,000 at the last published census were the enforcing authorities for the Act. As a National Census was taken during 1971, hence the transfer to this Council.

The scope of the Act is not really a public health matter nor is it included in the training of Public Health Inspectors.

However, we were given the job to do so it becomes another one of those odd duties that detract from the time we should be devoting to our true functions in the public health field.

The Act is a consolidation of various Acts dating back to 1912 and in light of modern trends in trading, parts of the Act appeared to us, being uninitiated, to be out of date.

The requirements of the Act deal with the employment of persons and hours of trading, for example - half-day holidays, hours worked by young persons, employment on Sundays, closing times, goods traded in on Sundays, etc., and it appears that over 200 premises in the district might be affected.

In the effort to familiarise ourselves with this law, we came across some of those peculiarities which gains for legislation the accusation that "the law is an ass", for example, in relation to Sunday trading limits we found:-

"Fried fish and chips" may not be sold from a fish shop, but it appears that a loophole exists which allows fish to be sold and chips to be sold, separately,

"refreshment" includes bread, salami meat sausage, but not if in bulk, and a raw kipper has been judged acceptable but not packets of tea.

Thirty visits were made in connection with this new duty.

PET ANIMALS ACT, 1951

This Act sets out to control the conditions in which pets are kept prior to sale and premises where such sales take place are subject to licensing and inspection.

Three licences were renewed this year.

SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT, 1964

Local authorities are responsible for maintaining a register of dealers in scrap metal, who either have a store in the area, or reside or have business premises in the area. Other parts of the Act are enforced by the Police.

Two applications were received and registered.

THE EXAMINATION OF PLANS

Checking on the plans coming into the Council for approval under Planning & Building Regulations requirements forms a significant part of our work.

The particular aspects we are interested in are conformity with the;

- Clean Air Acts, 1956 and 1968
- Factories Act, 1961
- Food Hygiene (General) Regulations, 1970
- Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act, 1963
- Petroleum (Consolidation) Act, 1928

We have no power to recommend disapproval, so we have to rely on bringing any discrepancies to the notice of architects and designers, except that in the latter case we call for an additional submission for licence application and can then recommend decisions for that purpose.

In addition plans are scrutinised when submitted for Standard and Improvement Grant applications.

In all, some ninety-eight plans were vetted during the year and in addition to correspondence where necessary, thirty-one interviews and discussions were held with designers.

